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## LA FARGE'S STAINED GLASS

THE name of John La Farge holds a foremost place in the history of American stained glass, so that the gift, by Mrs. Otto Heinigke, of a characteristic example of his work is an interesting one. This lunette panel is shown in the Accessions Room for the month, together with a small panel by Otto Heinigke, the gift of the same donor.

they no longer followed the mechanism now that they had learned it, and consequently that whatever they did was only expressed in the manner that had first been used for their design. Moreover, they made designs for the drawings and not for the result: beautiful drawings—bad result! It occurred to me that if I made a design for stained glass to be carried out as was proposed in this coun-



ITALIAN LANDSCAPE  
BY FRIEDRICH A. VON KAULBACH

At a time when the progress of stained glass was at a standstill not only in America, but in Europe as well, John La Farge brought about a new development. He speaks himself in some notes written in 1893 of the condition of the field when he began his work, "I thought that I had noticed in 1873 in the work of the English artists in stained glass, that they seemed to have come to the end of their rope, and that their work in glass had ceased improving; and it seemed to me that the cause of this was mainly because the designer had become separated from the man who made the actual window. I do not mean separated in sympathy, but that

try that I should follow the entire manufacturing, selecting the colors myself, and watching every detail." This is what he did. It was the theory of his work, and explains in no small degree the measure of his artistic success. He was essentially an experimenter and a discoverer, gradually developing the various elements of technique and color palette.

The lunette can be dated about 1882, a period when he was engaged upon some of his most important works. Thomas Wright, who was chief assistant in his mechanical and color experimenting, writes that this "panel was made for Mr. Vanderbilt's house, but Mr. La Farge thought it

was good enough to keep as a sample." Interesting for this reason, it is important for the Museum collection because of the combination in it of many of the different processes he invented or developed. The mask, for instance, is in mosaic, in this case almost a cloisonné; the wings of the griffin and the bodies of the grotesques are made of fused particles of vario-colored glass; the field is opalescent glass, used also in the leaves and flowers, together with pot-metal; the jewels are of three varieties—moulded opalescent, pressed pot-metal, chipped or broken glass. These various processes he combined upon the same ground to give the subtle gradations of color and beautiful variations of tone for which he diligently sought.

No comparison of this lunette with antique glass can be made, nor should it be attempted. It is frankly impossible, for La Farge's work marks an epoch in method, material, and spirit. Unique as it is in technique, it is more unusual in color combination and motifs of design.

Through his stained glass John La Farge gained the widest notice and fame in America and Europe; and the great Watson memorial window, which he exhibited at the Paris Exhibition in 1889, won for him

the insignia of the Legion of Honor. Not content with awarding a medal of the first class, the artists of the jury paid this tribute: "His work cannot be fully gauged here, where a single window represents a name the most celebrated and widely known in our sister republic. He has created in all its details an art unknown before, an entirely new industry, and in a country without tradition he will become one followed by thousands of pupils filled with the same respect for him that we have ourselves for our own masters. To share in this respect is the highest praise we can give to this great artist."

The smaller panel by Otto Heinigke represents the work of an artist who was instrumental in reintroducing and developing this art contemporaneously with the work of La Farge. Extremely facile in design, he produced an exceedingly large total of work. While this is not a complete example but an experimental fragment from windows designed and executed for the court rooms of the Federal Building at Indianapolis, it nevertheless illustrates the chief characteristics of his work, a mastery of the use of color and a conventionalized drawing of form employed with decorative effect.

W. M. M.



LUNETTE, STAINED GLASS  
BY JOHN LA FARGE